

Message Text

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SUBJECT: CONSULTATIONS FOR FORMATION OF ADVISORY COUNCIL

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 0329 (DTG 211740Z JAN 76)

BEGIN SUMMARY: CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR CONTINUED HIS CONSULTATIONS WITH VARIOUS GROUPS IN PREPARATION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL. HIS MOST RECENT MEETINGS HAVE BEEN WITH THE LIBERAL PARTY, THE NATIONAL UNITY FRONT OF CAMPEÑINOS, THE FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS, THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY, THE INNOVATION AND UNITY PARTY AND THE HONDURAN COUNCIL OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE. THE DECISIONS OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL WILL PROBABLY ASSUME QUASI-LEGISLATIVE SIGNIFICANCE. END SUMMARY.

1. A LIBERAL PARTY DELEGATION MET WITH CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR ON JANUARY 22, 1976 FOR APPROXIMATELY FIVE HOURS. THE PARTY LEADER, MODESTO RODAS ALVARADO, INDICATED THAT HE WAS IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT WITH THE POINTS PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED TO MELGAR BY THE NATIONAL PARTY IN REGARD TO THE FORMATION OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL. HE SAID THAT ALL THOSE

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WHO HAD PARTICIPATED IN THE DISCUSSION WITH THE CHIEF OF

STATE HAD THE BEST INTERESTS OF HONDURAS IN MIND AND WERE NO LOOKING FOR PERSONAL OR INSTITUTIONAL GAIN. HE CONCURRED WITH THE NATIONAL PARTY THAT REPRESENTATION ON THE ADVISORY COUNCIL SHOULD BE DETERMINED ON THE BASIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE 1971 ELECTIONS.

2. MELGAR ALSO HAD A MEETING WITH THE FUNC (NATIONAL UNITY FRONT OF CAMPESINOS), WHICH IS COMPOSED OF THE THREE MAJOR CAMPESINO ORGANIZATIONS: NATIONAL CAMPESINO ASSOCIATION OF HONDURAS (ANACH); THE NATIONAL UNION OF CAMPESINOS (UNC); AND THE FEDERATION OF COOPERATIVES (FECORAH). THE FUNC LEADERSHIP EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR PROCEEDING WITH AGRARIAN REFORM BECAUSE IT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM CONFRONTING THE COUNTRY. THE SPOKESMEN FOR THE FUNC STATED THAT THE THREE GROUPS ARE NOT THINKING IN TERMS OF A QUICK RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONALITY BECAUSE IT COULD BRING ABOUT A SLOW-DOWN IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGRARIAN REFORM. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE REPRESENTATIVES ON THE ADVISORY COUNCIL SHOULD BE CHOSEN BY THE GROUPS THAT THEY REPRESENT RATHER THAN BEING CHOSEN BY THE GOVERNMENT.

3. THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PCD) SPOKESMAN STATED THAT THE RESULTS OF THE PARTY'S CONSULTATION WITH THE CHIEF OF STATE HAD BEEN POSITIVE. FURTHERMORE, HE COMMENTED THAT THE PARTY LEADERS BELIEVED THAT THE ADVISORY COUNCIL COULD BE AN EXTREMELY USEFUL MECHANISM TO OBTAIN THE VIEWPOINT OF VARIOUS SECTORS OF HONDURAN SOCIETY. HE DISAGREED WITH THE VIEW OF THE TRADITIONAL PARTIES THAT REPRESENTATION ON THE COUNCIL SHOULD BE BASED ON THE RESULTS OF THE 1971 ELECTION AND STATED THAT THE COMPOSITION OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL IS A MATTER FOR THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT TO DECIDE.

4. THE LEADER OF THE FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS INDICATED THAT ITS MAIN POINT OF DISCUSSION WITH MELGAR HAD CONCERNED A RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONALITY. THEY ALSO COMMENTED THAT IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT WOMEN HAD BEEN CONSULTED IN DEPTH ON SUCH ISSUES. FURTHER, THE FEDERATION LEADERS SAID THEY WERE NOT IN AGREEMENT WITH THE VIEW OF TRADITIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES IN REGARD TO THE COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL BECAUSE THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP OF THOSE PARTIES REPRESENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ONLY THEMSELVES AND NOT THEIR MEMBERSHIP. THEY SUPPORTED THE VIEW THAT MEMBERSHIP ON THE COUNCIL SHOULD BE BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUALITY OF REPRESENTATION OF THE VARIOUS SOCIAL AND POLITICAL GROUPS.

5. SPOKESMEN FOR COHEP (HONDURAN COUNCIL OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE) INDICATED THAT THEY HAD BEEN PLEASED WITH THE DISCUSSIONS WITH MELGAR AND SAID HE ASSURED THEM THAT HE WILL

CONTINUE TO MEET WITH THEM ON A MONTHLY BASIS. THEY ALSO GAVE HIM COPIES OF THE VARIOUS AGREEMENTS DEVELOPED IN THE COURSE OF THEIR OWN DIALOGUE WITH VARIOUS SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SECTORS. THE SPOKESMEN SAID COHEP SHOULD HAVE THE SAME LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION ON THE CONCIL AS OTHER GROUPS.

6. THE INNOVATION AND UNITY PARTY (PINU) LEADERS SAID THAT THEY WERE SATISFIED WITH THEIR CONSULTATIONS WITH MELGAR. THEY TOLD MELGAR THAT THE ADVISORY COUNCIL SHOULD DEVELOP THE PROCEDURES FOR A RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONALITY. THEY ALSO EMPHASIZED THAT REPRESENTATION ON THE COUNCIL SHOULD BE THE SAME FOR ALL GROUPS WHICH PARTICIPATE.

7. MELGAR WAS INTERVIEWED BY THE PRESS ON JANUARY 26 WITH RESPECT TO THE STRUCTURE OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL AND THE MECHANICS BY WHICH ITS MEMBERS WOULD BE SELECTED. HE DECLINED COMMENT ON BOTH POINTS UNTIL AFTER HE FINISHES HIS CURRENT CONSULTATIONS. HE ALSO REFUSED TO SPECULATE ON WHETHER HE WAS INTERESTED IN BECOMING A CANDIDATE IN THE 1979 ELECTIONS AND SAID THAT IT WAS NOT THE MOMENT TO CONSIDER SUCH QUESTIONS.

8. BEGIN COMMENT: MELGAR IS WELL ADVANCED IN HIS CONSULTATIONS WITH THE PARTIES AND SOCIAL GROUPS AND WILL PROBABLY FINISH SUCH CONSULTATIONS IN ANOTHER WEEK. AT THAT TIME, THE POINTS OF VIEW EXPRESSED IN THE CONSULTATIONS WILL BE SUMMARIZED AND USED AS THE BASIS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNCIL'S STATUTES. WHILE THE EVENTUAL STRUCTURE OF THE COUNCIL IS IMPORTANT, THE CRITICAL FACTOR WILL BE THE TYPE OF REPRESENTATIVES SELECTED BY THE VARIOUS GROUPS. THE COUNCIL STANDS A GOOD CHANCE OF BEING AN IMPORTANT ADVISORY BODY IF THE REPRESENTATIVES ARE WILLING TO WORK TOGETHER PRODUCTIVELY.

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9. A POINT TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE FORMATION OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL IS THE SUPPORT ITS FORMATION GIVES TO MELGAR'S POSITION. IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY OTHER FORMAL REPRESENTATIVE GROUP, THE COUNCIL'S OPINIONS WILL ASSUME QUASI-LEGISLATIVE SIGNIFICANCE. THE COUNCIL WILL BE LINKED TO THE GOVERNMENT APPARATUS AND THE SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL (SDC) THROUGH THE CHIEF OF STATE. MELGAR, THEREFORE, WILL HAVE A COUNTERBALANCE TO THE SDC. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE SDC IS LOSING ITS SUPERVISORY ROLE, BUT ONLY THAT THE LT. COLONELS WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT TO IGNORE THE VIEWS OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL IN MAKING DECISIONS ON GOVERNMENT POLICY. END COMMENT. SANCHEZ

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